New Mexico Small Business Assistance Program to recognize outstanding companies at Innovation Celebration

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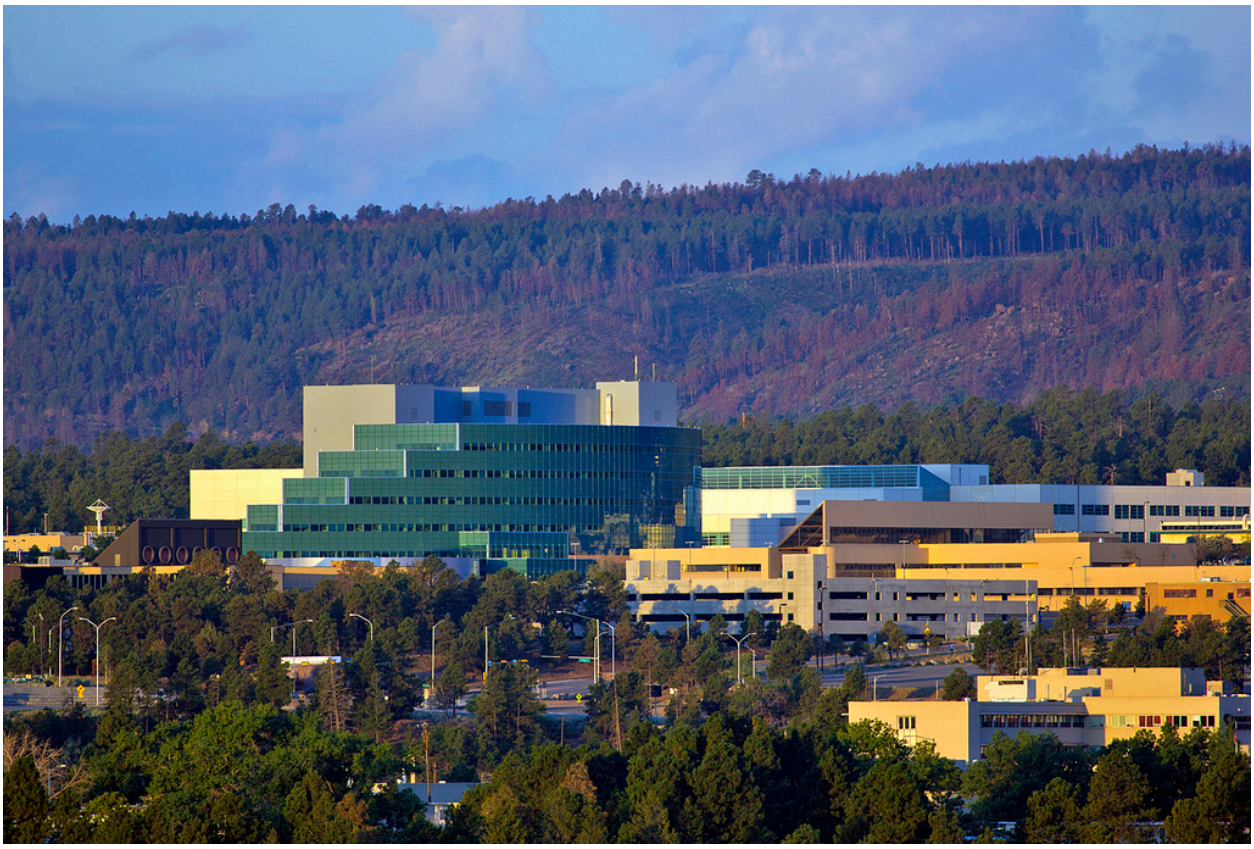

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, April 6, 2010—The New Mexico Small Business Assistance Program (NMSBA) helped 320 companies in 25 counties last year to solve technical challenges. Nine companies that participated in the program in 2009 will be honored for their outstanding achievements April 8 at the NMSBA's Innovation Celebration.

Journalists are invited to meet small business owners, scientists, and LANL and Sandia officials at the NMSBA program's Innovation Celebration from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. April 8 at The Bishop's Lodge in Tesuque.

A partnership of Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, and the state of New Mexico, the NMSBA program connects scientists and engineers with New Mexico businesses in exchange for a state gross receipts tax credit. In 2009, the

tax credit was nearly $4.3 million — about $1.9 million for Los Alamos and $2.4 million for Sandia.

The NMSBA program also contracts with the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, and New Mexico Tech to provide assistance to companies.

“The NMSBA program is an effective partnership among small businesses, the state of New Mexico, and our national labs,” said Kurt Steinhaus, director of LANL’s Community Programs Office. “It’s an economic development tool that truly leverages world-class science and technology to address statewide small business challenges.”

“The Innovation Celebration is an opportunity to showcase the NMSBA program as an effective economic development tool for our state and to thank members of our state legislature for their leadership and foresight in passing the Laboratory Partnership with Small Business Tax Credit Act,” added Steinhaus.

Among the companies to be recognized at the event is SimTable. The Santa Fe company built a device, SimTable™, that can predict and display fire behavior using an interactive, three-dimensional model on a sand table. They enlisted LANL to make the simulation more interactive. Now the SimTable “sees” movement and objects through a camera and can project those on to the table. SimTable anticipates hiring two engineers by the end of the year to work on the design and manufacturing.

“NMSBA helped build research developed at the Santa Fe Complex into a marketable product,” said Stephen Guerin of SimTable. In March, SimTable was one of two local companies that received $100,000 awards from the Los Alamos National Security, LLC Venture Acceleration Fund.

A selection of other companies that will be recognized at the Innovation Celebration event are:• Firefly Lighting in Tesuque, which makes decorative lighting fixtures based on Southwestern artistic traditions, achieved a 10 percent increase in sales and a 30 percent improvement in on-time delivery of orders after the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership helped the company streamline its manufacturing process and reorganize their shop floor. This has put Firefly Lighting in a good position to meet the increased demand resulting from its e-commerce Web site.• Intor, Inc. manufactures optical, soft-coated thin-film filters us¬ing technology developed in the 1960s. While seeking ways to remain competitive and grow his company, CEO Stanley Bryn collaborated with Frank Reinow, an assistant professor in the Department of Man¬agement at New Mexico Tech, to analyze Intor’s current technology, market position, and growth potential. The NM Tech team assessed the company’s soft-coated thin-film technology, the state of the current optical filter market, and future market trends. The results encouraged Intor to invest in further research to identify potential end users that incorporate hard-coated thin films into their manufacturing processes.• Sustainable Resources, Inc. Sustainable Resources, Inc. (SRI) wanted to develop the former Roswell National Desalination Facility, newly named Sun Harvest Proving Ground, into a business incubator for research, development, and commercialization of applications of algae growth for water purification and biofuel generation. With help from the Anderson School of Management’s Management of Technology Program (UNM MOT) at the University of New Mexico, a technology assessment and forecast was performed as well as an expeditionary market¬ing study for SRI. SRI President Joe Ortiz attributes his business success to UNM MOT’s innovative approach to marketing and business development. Sun Harvest Proving Ground will now be used as an algae business incubator ready to grow, harvest, extract, and market algae for bio fuels.•

The Ramah-Española Basin Leveraged Project assisted water treatment companies by educating their target market — private well owners — about the quality of their drinking water, and by providing the companies with needed data about groundwater quality and treatment options. The information provided is being used by the sponsoring companies in both locations to identify potential customers and offer an appropriate, inexpensive point-of-use treatment system, and develop and evaluate innovative treatment technologies.• ThermaSun in Taos developed and designed a solar thermal system called the ThermaSaver. LANL evaluated a selection of plastic components using accelerated aging to test for reliability and durability at the upper limit of their operating temperature. Owner Larry Mapes said just like the photovoltaic inverter of the 1980s, his company's work "will simplify installations, meet utility durability standards and interface with a home's existing heating and cooling systems."

For more information on all nine companies, visit http://www.nmsbaprogram.org/.